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United States Department of Agriculture,

BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY,

Seed and Plant Introduction,

WASHINGTON, D. C.

THE CHAYOTE, A NEW WINTER VEGETABLE FROM THE SOUTH.

The chayote, otherwise known in New Orleans among the Creoles as the mirliton or vegetable pear, belongs to the cucumber family. The fruit is produced on a vine which is grown on a trellis. It is a native of Mexico and the West Indies; has been established in Madeira, and its culture in the East Indies is being encouraged by Great Britain. It has remarkable keeping qualities, is adapted to many more uses than the cucumber, and is a decidedly new acquisition in this country.

This new vegetable can be grown on the abandoned lands of the South in large quantities. It can be shipped north in October and will be seasonable until March, thus forming a welcome change from the ordinary run of winter vegetables.

The Department of Agriculture is interested in encouraging the planting of the chayote as a new industry in the South, and the heads of the culinary departments of two prominent hotels in New York and Philadelphia are enthusiastic over the possibilities of this new vegetable. They have prepared it in various ways, some of which are described below with their permission. They especially recommend the chayote in its baked form and as a salad.

Although chayote shoots, roots, and seeds are all edible and form very palatable dishes, the fruit is the only part of the plant now available for shipment to northern markets. The younger fruits have more flavor than those left to mature on the vines; hence early in the season they are better than at a later period.

HOW TO PREPARE CHAYOTES.

Peel and cut in two the chayotes, take the seeds out, and cook in boiling water with a little salt for one hour and a quarter to one hour and a half; then proceed as follows for—

Chayote soup.—Pound and pass through a sieve the prepared chayotes; then put the soup in a saucepan, seasoning it with salt and pepper, and warm it up, finishing it by adding some raw cream.

Stuffed chayotes.—Stuff the halves of the prepared chayotes with some Duxelle¹ and besprinkle with fresh bread crumbs and some butter,

¹The following is the recipe for Duxelle: One onion very finely chopped, 2 finely chopped shallots; stew in butter until it gets slightly brown, but do not let it get too high a color; then add to it some fresh-chopped mushrooms and let the whole simmer until the moisture of the mushrooms has been thrown out; season with salt and pepper and add a little chopped parsley.

seasoning to taste; then bake in oven for fifteen minutes and serve with glaze meat sauce and tomato sauce.

Stewed chayotes.—Cut into slices the prepared chayotes and stew them in butter for ten minutes, seasoning with salt and pepper.

Fried chayotes.—Cut the prepared chayotes into sticks one-fourth of an inch thick by 1 inch in length; then dip them in beaten eggs and in fresh bread crumbs and fry slowly in hot frying fat.

Chayotes, Andalusian style.—Cook the prepared chayotes in butter, with chicken stock, seasoning with salt and pepper, for half an hour; then drain and fill the halves with fresh stewed tomatoes and serve with tomato sauce.

Chayotes baked in cream.—Cut into slices the prepared chayotes and mix them in with cream sauce; season with salt, pepper, and nutmeg, put them in a dish, and sprinkle on top some grated cheese, fresh bread crumbs, and butter; then bake for ten minutes in a hot oven.

Chayotes in cream.—Cut the prepared chayotes in the shape of “clove of garlic” and cook for half an hour in some light cream sauce well seasoned.

Chayote fritters.—Cut into small pieces the prepared chayotes and season; add some white sauce and cook for a quarter of an hour; then let it cool off, and when cold take some of it the size of a small egg and dip it in frying butter and fry in very hot frying fat; serve with fried parsley and tomato sauce.

Chayotes, Lyonnaise style.—Cut the prepared chayotes into quarters and put them into a saucepan with some chopped shallots previously cooked in butter and white wine; also some meat glaze and consommé; then let cook slowly for one hour, finishing by adding some fresh butter and chopped parsley.

Chayotes, Barigoule style.—Make a preparation with some sausage meat, chopped mushrooms, shallots, and parsley, all mixed. Then fill the chayotes (cut in halves) and prepare as above; cover each half with a slice of lard, put into a saucepan with some sliced onions, carrots, and some meat stock; let cook slowly for an hour; then skim off the fat and the gravy and serve with the chayotes.

Baked chayotes.—Wash some chayotes very clean and put into a moderately hot oven to bake for two and a half hours; serve with sweet butter.

Chayote salad.—After being well cooked the chayotes should be allowed to cool off, after which they should be split into four equal pieces from the top and then sliced to a thickness of, say, one-quarter of an inch; place in a serving dish on a large leaf of lettuce with mayonnaise or any sort of French dressing. This will make as fine a dish of salad as can be imagined.

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FEBRUARY 3, 1908.

